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SHA
Driven to Excel
State Highway
Administration

Robert L. Flanagan, *Secretary*
Neil J. Pedersen, *Administrator*

Maryland Department of Transportation

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting Date:	November 17, 2008
Subject:	ADA Advisory Committee Meeting #5
Location:	Maryland State Highway Administration
Recorder:	Harriet Levine

Members in Attendance:	Normetha Goodrum	SHA Deputy Administrator
	Linda Singer	SHA Office of Policy and Research
	Norie Calvert	SHA Office of Highway Development
	Ben Dubin	Maryland Alliance of Disability Commissions
	Ginger Palmer	Maryland Alliance of Disability Commissions (via telephone)
	Sharon Maneki	National Federation of the Blind (NFB)
	Harriet Levine	Jacobs
Other guests/ Alternate attendees:	George Failla	Maryland Department of Disabilities
	Lourdes Castaneda	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
	James Martin	Anne Arundel County Disabilities Commission
Members Unable To Attend:	Rosemarie Morales	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
	Cari Watrous	Maryland Department of Disabilities

Introductions

Normetha Goodrum welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members for their attendance. Following introductions, Linda Singer reported on some recent activities.

Peer Exchange
Maryland State Highway Administration recently hosted an ADA Peer Exchange with representatives from the Mid-Atlantic area, Florida and Texas. The group was able to share experiences, lessons learned, and there was a good exchange of information.

County Coordination
Linda also informed the group that SHA is currently coordinating with the counties, sharing data and training.

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Self Evaluation and Transition Plan
Linda reminded the group that the field work for the Self Evaluation had been completed which established the baseline data on compliant and non-compliant elements along SHA's public rights-of-way. The last element of the Self-Evaluation process is public meetings. At the time of the Advisory Committee meeting, open houses had been held in 19 of 23 counties. The remainder of the meetings are being scheduled at this time. SHA has received input from people regarding their concerns and issues with accessibility.

At this time, SHA is working towards a prioritized set of projects that will be carried out. SHA has set a goal to increase compliance by 2% per year.

Harriet Levine explained to the group that, the Transition Plan is in essence an overall plan to identify, program, prioritize and schedule projects.

Ben Dubin commented that if SHA has a goal of only 2% a year, it could take 50 years to complete all the existing projects.

Norie Calvert explained the many different ways to get improvements made, which goes beyond the programmed ADA funding. Other methods include planned capital improvement projects, developer projects, resurfacing, as well as other projects. SHA expects to exceed the 2% annual growth in accessible sidewalks.

Norie also explained that ramp improvements are going much faster than sidewalks in terms of improving the percent compliant. Currently, improvements have gone from .05 to 9 percent in two years. It was also pointed out that public input will be a major factor in determining the priority for which ADA retrofit projects get selected for design and construction.

Norie explained that SHA has a dedicated funding source for ADA improvements and she reviewed some of the efforts recently completed or underway.

- Self-Evaluation Inventory completed in 2006.
- Retrofit projects started in 2007.
- In District 3 (Montgomery and Prince George's counties), two projects are complete, one is under construction and one was just advertised for construction.
- In District 4 (Baltimore and Harford counties) 7 projects have been completed and 3 are under construction. In addition, another contract is being issued for additional work.
- In District 5 (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties) 12 projects have been completed.
- In District 7 (Frederick, Carroll, and Howard counties) 5 projects have been completed.

In total, over $10 million in funding is has been dedicated for ADA improvements and additional funds are in place for the coming years. There is $4.4 million available in FY 09, $5.4 million in FY 10 and beyond that is not established at this time. These funding dollars represent ADA retrofit projects; other upgrades will be made through capital improvement projects.

Ben suggested sending information to the County commissions about what projects are underway and what projects have been completed. This is an excellent idea that will be done in the future.

Harriet gave an overview of the ADA portal (SHA's GIS-based mapping and prioritization tool) which included what it is, and some of the general features of the portal. Sharon Maneki asked if the portal was available for public use. Norie explained that currently it is not, but that is one of the main focuses of the next generation of the software. It was explained that this is a new application that has just been finalized by SHA.

There was a discussion of what other jurisdictions were doing and if they were undertaking similar efforts. James Martin indicated that the City of Annapolis was looking at their system. Ben asked if there were problems with the historic areas and James indicated that none had come up at this time.

Norie did a demonstration of the ADA portal and walked through the data elements and explained the scoring criteria for the prioritization of projects. The criteria include the presence of:

- Accidents/pedestrian fatalities
- Public input
- Government facilities
- Mass Transit facilities
- Public facilities

Norie explained that the prioritization is based on a scoring of the factors listed above; Pedestrian accidents is weighted the highest with Public input following. Government facilities, Mass Transit facilities and Public facilities are equally weighted. Locations with the highest occurrence would generally get a higher score. Other factors affecting implementation include overall feasibility, right-of-way impacts, and utility work.

Norie also demonstrated that the ADA Portal is a useful tool for design as well as an analytical tool. Finally, she demonstrated that the portal has the ability to create reports on various elements.

James Martin asked if gaps in existing sidewalk showed up in the portal. Norie answered that gaps show up in the portal, essentially as voids of data as there was no information on sidewalks collected in those locations. Small gaps can be prioritized.   Harriet stated that many of the public comments received regarded areas where there is no sidewalk.

Norie discussed the sidewalk program. She stated that historically SHA didn't purchase right-of-way and needed county participation and prioritization, but now SHA is working to do more within the sidewalk program.

Lourdes Castaneda asked if this was for state and/or state and county. Norie responded that it only covered state roads.

Overall sidewalk compliance has increased from a baseline of 49 percent to 54 percent.

Ben inquired as to whether this technology and methodology been shared with counties. Norie explained that hand-held units are $1000/unit; the process took about 9 months to complete along the Maryland State Highway network utilizing 3-two person crews . Harriet further explained to Ben that SHA shared data collection with counties, but the portal is just getting to where SHA wants it to be. SHA would be pleased to share this information with other jurisdictions. The data is kept live and up to date as new projects are completed.

APS
Linda reviewed the status of APS installations. There is a 10-year plan to upgrade all pedestrian activated signals to APS by 2016. There are currently 490 APS projects in design and SHA anticipates approximately 310 being complete by September 2009. All of the APS locations that were specifically requested have been completed. Ben commented that at the Baltimore County meeting an individual was concerned with the APS system because he felt the APS chirping distracted his listening skills. Sharon stated that APS is problematic. The most important issue is traffic. Sharon said that SHA's current model isn't as bad; older ones had more issues. The current models can adjust to ambient sounds. Sharon noted that initially SHA did a priority based on the difficulty of the intersection but that seemed to have been a waste since it seems they are just doing what they want.

Quiet Car Task Force
The task force is conducting its second meeting November 18th and will report to the legislature by end of year. A parallel activity is also being conducted at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Ginger Palmer asked what is the quiet car issue. Sharon explained that more and more hybrids and electric vehicles don't make enough noise and come up on pedestrians without them knowing. People rely on sound and vision equally (even sighted individuals) and quiet cars are creating a safety issue.

Facilities Assessment
SHA is currently underway with an assessment of its facilities. SHA is looking at all facilities to ensure accessibility. SHA is also going to identify facilities that are accessible for public meetings.

Other Issues
Linda opened a discussion of other issues including public involvement after the formal open house meetings, the advisory committee and other issues of interest to the group.

Ben indicated that the Alliance is a group who represents 11 county commissions and the City of Baltimore. The Alliance is a good place to start with outreach. He suggested that SHA use an Alliance meeting to make presentations and target different disability groups. Ginger agreed that the Alliance is a good resource because they will share information with the counties. The Alliance meets the 1st Monday of each month except for July. Ginger suggested that Linda contact her, when appropriate, and she will get a presentation added to the agenda. The group agreed that this should be once or twice a year when information is available.

George suggested that SHA be more proactive and share information. Based on the discussion, Harriet suggested sending updates to the counties once a year with the schedule and project status (i.e. what projects are complete, under construction, and under design). She also made the suggestion to use these updates to remind the counties to let SHA know where there are issues. Ginger volunteered to send the update to the counties. George also volunteered to send updates as well and share information with his contacts. Normetha Goodrum suggested information also be put on SHA's website.

The group agreed that the Advisory Committee should only meet if SHA has something new. Harriet queried the group and a teleconference meeting format was deemed to be good for people. Norie commented that SHA wants to keep lines of communication open, in and out. Ben added that conference calls tend to last longer, especially if people have to type in questions. Harriet discussed the use of e-mail to provide status reports and solicit feedback. A final suggestion was made to meet at least once a year and hold other meetings as needed with e-mail updates more frequently. Sharon asked that return receipts be attached so meeting organizers know people receive e-mails. Also, meetings will be advertised well in advance so meetings get a good turnout.

Ben asked Lourdes if FHWA monitors the county system as well as the state. Lourdes indicated that each state is responsible to make sure the county takes care of compliance. Harriet commented that there is differing guidance and differing interpretations in the area of sub-recipients. She added that this area still needs a lot of development.